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INFORMATION ON THE GDR LABOR FORCE,
TRAINING, EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN

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Labor Force

In the course of the Five-Year Plan, 890,000 workers are to be added to the labor force. Of this number, 448,000 are to be employed in industry, 230,000 in construction, 25,000 in transportation, and 56,000 in trade.

The Ministry of Labor estimates that by 1953 the number of graduates leaving school will increase to the extent that it will exceed the number of workers leaving the labor force by 400,000. That leaves 490,000 workers to be obtained from the available labor reserve and to be trained for skilled labor. The graduates of 1954 - 1955 cannot be considered to play an important role in adding workers within the Five-Year Plan.

Within individual branches of the economy, the following types of new workers are greatly needed:

Mining -- Hevers, mine foremen, mining engineers, and technicians.

Metallurgy -- Rolling mill workers, smelters, foundry workers, formers, and forge workers.

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Machine-building -- Lathe operators (especially for vertical turret lathes and drill lathes), milling machine operators, metal grinders, electric welders, toolmakers, machinists, machine mechanics, motor mechanics for gasoline and diesel engines and for engine assembly work, boilermakers, copper-smiths, and plumbers.

Electrical and optical industry -- Precision mechanics, optical workers, toolmakers, lathe and milling machine operators.

Shipbuilding -- Construction workers for metal ships, ship's machinists, shipbuilding engineers and technicians, boilermakers, electric welders, fitters, toolmakers, lathe operators, milling machine operators, formers, copper-smiths, forge workers, boat construction men, construction workers for wooden ships, ship's carpenters, furniture makers, and loftsmen.

Railroad car construction -- Fitters, carpenters, plumbers, and pipefitters.

Building industry -- Masons, carpenters, painters, roofing men, plumbers, locksmiths, glaziers, concrete workers, metal benders, specialized iron workers, furniture makers, and patternmakers.

Transportation -- Qualified locomotive firemen and engineers, motor vehicle drivers and mechanics, and tractor drivers and fitters for the MAS (machine rental stations).

Filling the shortage of skilled workers in the textile, ceramics, and shoe industries is of secondary importance and will be undertaken after the needs of the trades most important to the economy have been taken care of. This corresponds to the well-known trend of the Five-Year Plan, paying little attention to consumers' goods industries.

Since the reserves of able-bodied male workers have been essentially exhausted, the greatest possible number of women are to be brought into the labor force. They are to be provided mainly for the electrical, optical, machine-building, precision instrument, wood and furniture, shoe, construction, and printing industries. Furthermore, the number of women in the administrative service, the post office department, and the Reichsbahn is to be greatly increased, to free male workers for other types of work.

Skilled workers are also to be obtained from the groups of resettlers, many of whom live in the country without using their skills. One of the obstacles here is the housing problem, which will remain an obstacle in the near future because of the limited housing construction in the GDR.

The matter of workers changing their jobs is to be studied, and job changes are to be limited to a minimum. This is another example of following the pattern in the USSR, where job changes have been limited for a long time.

At the Fourth Session of the Central Committee of the SED (Socialist Unity Party), State Secretary Rudolf Wiese spoke at great length on the subject of better training for skilled work. His speech centered on instituting Soviet methods of worker training. Among other things, Wiese said that the shortage of technical books and textbooks must be alleviated by compelling authors of such books to collaborate with activists and production innovators (Neuer-ern) so that the methods of activists can be included in the texts.

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Training

In the course of the Five-Year Plan, 964,200 youths are to be trained in trade schools. This requires a greater number of trade teachers. At present, there are ten trade teachers' training schools in the GDR with a total capacity of 1,890 persons. It is planned to merge those schools which have small capacities and to raise the total capacity to 2,500 in 1952. At present, there are 29,796 students in GDR trade schools.

Great difficulties are encountered in apprentice training because of the small number of training workshops and the shortage of suitable machines and tools. It is planned to establish a group system in the training workshops, which would mean that apprentices would receive 3 days of training in the workshops and 3 days in the trade school. This system has the disadvantage that the practical training falls behind school work to a degree greater than is prescribed by law. For this reason, a Rostock plant followed a system whereby the first group of apprentices was trained for 8 weeks on all work positions in the workshop and then worked productively for 8 weeks on the simplest operations in the workshop, while the second group of apprentices received its basic training in the workshop. The people-owned Carl Zeiss Plant in Jena also started to use apprentices in the production process; they produce parts or instruments which are either needed in the main plant or are to be sold. The plant's training workshop was enlarged into an independent training plant; in the first year of training, 54 percent of the apprentices were girls.

Training of apprentices is also to be bolstered in private enterprises and in the hand trades. For private enterprises this will not be of any advantage, because great expense is involved in the training of apprentices, while the greater part of the apprentices will probably wind up in people-owned industry after being trained.

Another way to alleviate the difficulties of apprentice training is to shorten the training period, e.g., apprentices in the Wernigerode Electric Motor Plant took the final exam for a 3-year training period after only 2½ years. The Leipzig VVB LBH (Federation of People-Owned Enterprises for Agricultural, Construction, and Wood-Processing Machinery) reportedly has reduced its training period to 2 years.

The following information is known on the labor and training situation in the individual Laender of the GDR:

1. Sachsen

In 1950, 9,900 more girls were placed in apprentice positions than in 1949.

In Zwickau, the Engineer School for Chemical Engineering was opened at the beginning of 1951.

A trade school for flax knitters is being established in Gelenau, Kreis Annaberg. It is to be completed by the end of 1951. An investment sum of 200,000 Deutsche marks (East) has been earmarked for this school.

The Engineer School for Precision Instruments in Dresden is the only one of its kind in the GDR.

Correspondence courses for working people are being instituted at the Dresden Technical Institute and the Freiberg Mining Academy.

A training workshop for 300 apprentices is to start operating at the Astra Plant, Chemnitz, on 1 September 1951.

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2. Sachsen-Anhalt

In 1950, 54,679 youths were placed as apprentices, or twice as many as in 1948. Thereby, the 1950 plan for apprentice placements was fulfilled 113.1 percent. The hand trades, however, fulfilled their part of the plan by only 84 percent and placed only 41 percent of the number of female apprentices provided for in the plan.

The following three priorities were established in obtaining manpower: (1) obtaining workers for ore mining (i.e., uranium ore mining); (2) increasing the number of women in industry; and (3) finding apprentice and work positions for youths leaving school.

Halle University spent almost 4.6 million Deutsche marks (East) in 1950 to help young people to study. Two special schools were established to train agricultural advisers.

In Magdeburg, six apprentice homes for 485 apprentices are under construction.

The Magdeburg Apparatus Plant (SAG) (formerly Schaeffer & Budenberg) has established a youth fitter's workshop which is under a youth foreman. Also, one smelting furnace at this plant is attended by youths only.

The Mitteldeutsche Construction Enterprise has established three apprentice training sites for 174 apprentices.

The Bauunion Mitte (Construction Union "Center," i.e. "Central Germany") operates an apprentice school where 60 boys and girls are being trained to become bricklayers, carpenters, and concrete construction workers.

Great difficulties are being encountered in the mechanical training workshop of the Krupp-Gruson Plant (SAG), Magdeburg, because the training personnel want to return to production jobs where they could earn almost twice as much. Demands have been made that the pay schedule for training personnel be revised; otherwise, none of the activists or best workers will be willing to accept jobs as instructors. Even in this very important SAG enterprise it has not been possible to obtain the required machinery for the training workshop.

The Wolfen Dye Factory trained three times as many apprentices in 1950 as it did in 1949. In its chemistry shop mostly girls are being trained.

The VVB Magema (Federation of People-Owned Enterprises for Machinery for the Food-Processing, Refrigeration, and Chemical Industries) has a central training workshop, the "Werk der Jugend," in Halle, where 216 apprentices are being trained. Within the framework of the Five-Year Plan, this central training establishment is to be enlarged to train 450 apprentices.

3. Thuringen

Here the apprentice training plan for 1950 was fulfilled 109 percent. In 1949, 2,000 girls were placed as apprentices. At present, 40 percent of the apprentices are girls.

At the beginning of 1951, there were 137,000 able-bodied males and 171,000 female workers in Erfurt. This figure shows the shortage of male workers. There are 500 men with limited employment possibilities, while 30,000 more fully employable women could be added to the labor force.

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The Olympia Office Machine Factory in Erfurt employs at present 1,400 apprentices and youths. On 1 February 1951, a new training workshop was established to train the 160 apprentices the plant had hired in 1950. All 160 apprentices are girls.

The Rheinmetall-Borsig Plant in Soemmerda is converting its former apparatus plant into a training establishment for approximately 800 apprentices.

4. Brandenburg

A commission for manpower placement examined the Ernst Thaelmann People's Shipyard in Brandenburg and established that at least 300 skilled workers could be spared by the shipyard and employed in other key enterprises. Since the beginning of 1951, more than 200 of the workers have been transferred to the Hennigsdorf Steel and Rolling Mill, the LEW (Locomotive Construction and Electrical Goods Plant), and other important key enterprises. This method of labor placement, where labor has no choice in its job selection, is now characteristic of conditions in the GDR.

5. Mecklenburg

According to the apprentice plan, 20,000 apprentices were to be placed in 1950. Of all the apprentice job openings, 47 percent were earmarked for women. On 1 April 1950, there were 9,420 female apprentices in Mecklenburg, and at the end of October 1950 there were over 12,000. The greatest increase was in the metal and wood processing industries. However, because of some resistance from the hand trades, only 13 percent of the openings for apprentices in hand trades were filled by women.

A training establishment will be attached to the Rostock Fish Combine, now under construction, to train fishermen and women for work in fisheries.

Employment of Women

The following information is known on the employment of women in all GDR Laender:

Following the Soviet pattern, women in the GDR are to be trained to become engineers in basic materials industries and metallurgy, and they are to be especially important as replacements for men in leading positions in industry. At present, 20 percent of the employees in the GDR leather industry are women.

1. East Berlin

The people-owned Fortschritt Clothing Factory employs 4,000 workers in eight workshops; more than 80 percent of them are women. Production increases to be achieved under the Five-Year Plan will necessitate the employment of additional workers, most of whom will be women. To make work conditions more comfortable for women, the factory will establish half-day shifts and install kindergartens.

2. Sachsen

A compressor operator and machinist course just completed at the Schneeberg Erzgebirge Mining School had seven women among those attending.

Two women were trained as assistant foremen at the Sachsenwerk Radeberg (SAG); they are to become foremen later on.

For the first time in the GDR, two women were placed as butcher's apprentices in Dresden.

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3. Sachsen-Anhalt

The following high positions are filled by women in Sachsen-Anhalt at present: One minister assistant, three main department chiefs, three department chiefs, one lord mayor, 51 mayors, 35 city councilors, three Land councilors, eight Kreis councilors, and 123 town councilors.

Within the framework of the Five-Year Plan, the percentage of women in industry is to be raised from 33 to 42.2. To further this end, plants are going to install additional night nurseries, tailor shops, baths, etc. At present, there are 1,460 nursery homes for 70,000 children in Sachsen-Anhalt.

The Wolfen Film Factory (SAG) employs over 3,000 women at present.

The VVB Chemie has established a youth combine for 60 girls in Silberhuette.

The Halle Reichsbahn Repair Yard will establish a training workshop for female apprentices. The Magdeburg Reichsbahn Directorate will increase the number of women employees to 4,000 in 1951. A number of railroad stations are to have female personnel only, and it is also planned to have only women train personnel on a number of passenger trains.

4. Thuringen

In June 1949, the percentage of women among all employed workers was 36.2, below the average of the other GDR Laender. By the end of November 1950, the percentage rose to 38.3 percent. The number of women in the potash mining industry rose from 477 to 703 within 6 months. The IFA (Federation of People-Owned Enterprises for Vehicle and Parts Construction) Nordhausen Tractor Plant hired women for the first time in 1950 (200 women).

At the Wesungen Sawmill, eight women replaced eight men who were sent to the uranium ore mines.

5. Brandenburg

The people-owned Kjellberg Plant in Finsterwalde gave a course in welding technology in which, for the first time, three women participated.

6. Mecklenburg

At the Land School for Tractor Drivers in Guestrow-Bockhorst, 24 women tractor drivers completed their 3-month theoretical and practical training.

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